

SPEAKER BARRETT: They are withdrawn.

CLERK: Mr. President, Senator Hartnett would move to return the bill.

SPEAKER BARRETT: The Chair recognizes Senator Hartnett.

SENATOR HARTNETT: Yes, Mr. President, Mr. Speaker and members of the body, LB 851 was a bill that was introduced as amended to LB 95, which was adopted last year. That bill, LB 95 provided for the City of Lincoln to assume regulatory authority for a natural gas pipeline that was proposed for construction by Minnegasco. By adopting that bill, Minnegasco was able to avoid federal regulatory controls and resulting cost. LB 95 specifically provided for strict controls on the access to the pipelines to avoid regulatory complication. Minnegasco has constructed the pipeline and Lincoln has assumed the regulatory control of it but the intervening landowners over whose land the pipeline had been located have requested farm taps or service taps be created to provide them with natural gas services, which had been previously been financially unfeasible. Senator Warner and Senator Wehrbein in whose district the pipeline has been located introduced LB 851 to make these service taps possible. Later, concern had been expressed about the scope of LB 851 and the extent of which Minnegasco proposes to use that legislation to extend natural gas service. LB 851 was on consent calendar and an amendment was filed out of a concern about the potential reach of the legislation and the need to restrict it in an appropriate manner. All interested parties have met in the intervening days on several occasions to discuss their concern. All representative of invested owned natural gas utilities agree that there was a merit in the proposal and that they all favored expansion of service to new customers when that expansion proceeded in the environment of fair competition, equal opportunities for all companies to participate in the process. In an attempt to eliminate concerns, Minnegasco has authorized me to state for the record that their intent as regard to LB 851 and the pipeline at least is a relatively restricted one. First, it is their intent to restrict their new service along the pipeline only to the customers and facilities not previously served with natural gas. For the most part, this would involve service only to single low-volume customers or customers located in very close proximity to the pipeline. There is no village or city which is believed to be feasibly served directly by the